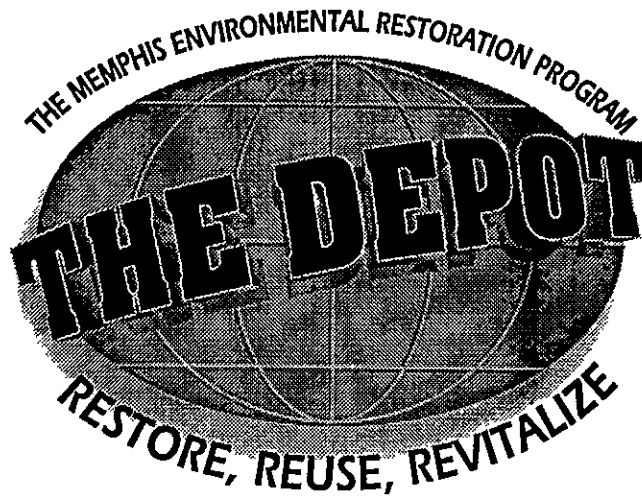




THE MEMPHIS DEPOT TENNESSEE

ADMINISTRATIVE RECORD COVER SHEET

AR File Number 389



**Dunn Field Update
March 5, 1999**

Recent media coverage regarding Dunn Field posed several questions throughout the Depot community. Here are answers to some of the questions.

Q: What buried material was the media talking about?

A The remnants of 29 captured German bomb casings containing the chemical warfare agent, mustard. In 1946, a train moving the captured bomb casings from Mobile, Alabama to Pine Bluff Arsenal, Arkansas stopped in Memphis because some casings had started to leak. Soldiers from the Chemical Quartermaster Corps stationed at the Memphis Depot assisted chemical agent specialists from Edgewood Arsenal, Maryland to drain the mustard from the casings into a neutralizing agent (bleach) and bury the casings. Recent studies to locate the exact disposal locations indicated the mustard has not moved away from the original location into groundwater or the surrounding soil.

Q: What is mustard?

A Mustard, a blister agent, is a colorless to light yellow to dark brown oily liquid. Although mustard does not evaporate readily, it may pose both a liquid contact hazard and a vapor hazard to the eyes, skin or respiratory tract. Mustard has the odor of garlic or horseradish.

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Q: Are you removing the mustard now?

A: No. The Army Corps of Engineers is currently in the project planning and document preparation stage. This summer the public will have the opportunity to review and comment on the documentation. Also, a safety plan must be prepared then reviewed and approved by the Department of Army and the Department of Health and Human Services. Safety plan approval should come this fall, then the necessary precautions to protect the community will be put in place and work will begin.

Q: Why didn't you tell us about this mustard before?

A: Depot documents and reports include lists of chemicals that are impacting the soil and groundwater. These reports are discussed at our RAB meetings, at our Community Information Sessions, and block club meetings. Depot Information Repositories have documents and information about the cleanup of the Depot available for public review.

Q: Do those mounds contain mustard?

A: No. Those mounds contain fluorspar, which is a mineral ore that has been stockpiled at Dunn Field. This ore is being sold to various businesses and is being removed by trucks. The mounds are covered with a transparent plastic after truck loads have been removed to minimize the dust.

We encourage you to attend our Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) meetings. Our next meeting will be Thursday, March 18, 1999, at 6 p.m. in the Conference Room, Building 144 at the Depot. Park at Gate 1 and enter through the side door.

If you have further questions, please call Alma Black Moore, Community Relations Specialist, at (901) 544-0613.

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